

WHEN THE WORLD SAID "NO" TO WAR

–by Sharleen Leahey
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On March 19, 2013 we commemorated the 10th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

On February 15, 2003 over 10 million people gathered and marched to say NO to the impending invasion of Iraq by the U.S. military. Tragically the pleas and demands of the great majority of people throughout the world went unheeded. Our actions for peace on that day should go down as a unique and significant turning point in the history of humanity. Never before had so many people, from so many different countries, on every continent, participated in a global action dedicated to preventing a war before it started. Writing in *The Nation*, journalist and peace activist Jonathan Schell declared that “a new superpower” had arisen that would prove to be more powerful than any nation state.

Over the past 10 years I, along with many of you, have continued to march, rally, and organize to call for an end to our nation’s unbridled militarism. A few months ago I experienced a tremendous loss in my own life which gave me a deepened understanding and insight into grief. For those who have lost a loved one in war the grief remains long after the flag-waving, lies and parades are over.

We must be clear that the wars being waged by our government are not “over” and are not going to be over unless a movement to stop them grows. We are now witnessing the prosecution of endless war. With the decrease in troops on the ground drones are being sent over a growing list of countries not even revealed to members of our Senate Intelligence Committee. These policies are killing thousands of innocent people in our name. These policies are war crimes and must be stopped.

As the great pacifist leader Martin Luther King wrote in 1967 one year before he was martyred:

“Wisdom born of experience should tell us that war is obsolete. . . The destructive power of modern weapons eliminates even the possibility that war may serve any good at all. If we assume that life is worth living and that humans have a right to survive, then we must find an alternative to war . . .

it is not enough to say ‘We must not wage war.’ It is necessary to love peace and sacrifice for it.”

I believe it is necessary and urgent that we find the strength and vision to re-dedicate ourselves to the task of building a culture of peace.

Despite what we see happening on the evening news . . . never forget that people, working together, are more powerful than any drone, than any political leader. Love truly is more powerful than hatred. Please remember . . . whatever you do for peace is IMPORTANT! The world needs you. It’s up to you and me